

# Lesser Known Characters 07 John-Telescopic Vision

by Joseph Balsan

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of having a clear vision for our lives and our future, and the characteristics of the heavenly city in Revelation 21, which represents our destiny as believers.*

**Duration:** 46:41

**Scripture:** John 3:14-15, Ephesians 2:7, James 1:18, Revelation 21:12-22

**Topics:** "Jesus Christ", "Heavenly Glory"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of believing in Jesus for salvation, as emphasized by the Gospel of John. He also discusses the four faces seen in a vision, which represent different attributes of God's dealings with humanity and the character of Jesus. The speaker then goes on to discuss various biblical characters, such as Barnabas and Stephen, who exemplify qualities like warm-heartedness and usefulness. Finally, the speaker shares a personal anecdote about seeing diamonds reflecting the rays of the sun, which serves as a metaphor for the future glory of the heavenly city.

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## Transcript

Well, I feel as we come to the end of this week that I couldn't express myself in better words than were expressed by Peter when he said it was good for us to be here, and it has been good for me to be here. I have enjoyed the week immensely, the fellowship has been wonderful, and it's been a revelation to me of Park of the Palms, and you've won another convert. And so I hope that as I do go forth and meet people as I travel from place to place, you can be sure that I'm going to speak well of the work here, the people here, the fellowship here, and we trust that you'll have fruit in days to come from this time here.

Now, we have been looking in nights past, we gave it a rather long title, vignettes of virtue as seen in seldom spoken of characters in the New Testament. And we have seen Ann as a beautiful picture to us of a believer who abides in Christ, who abides in fellowship with him. We have seen Apollos as one who expresses to us teachableness, who is willing to be taught.

We saw Epiphra as a man of prayerfulness for the people of God. We have seen Barnabas as a man who was characterized by warm-heartedness. And last night we were looking at Stephen, the man who sets forth for us usefulness or useableness.

Tonight we're not going to have a less known character, but I would like to speak to you tonight of the man with telescopic vision. We need vision. And so I would like to have you turn to Revelation chapter 21.

Revelation chapter 21, the last book in the Bible and the ninth verse of Revelation 21. And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.

And her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, the names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, on the east three gates, and on the north three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth four square, and the length is as large as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs.

The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third a chalcedony, the fourth an emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth a chrysoprisus, the eleventh a jacinth, the twelfth an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of one pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there, and they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into or unto it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bared twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations, and there shall be no more curts. But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.

And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which

must shortly be done.

Behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I, John, saw these things and heard them.

And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship." It's a good thing to worship the right one. John was making the mistake of worshipping the angel, and he was forbidden to do that. But the result of the vision that he saw was that it caused him to fall down and to worship.

I would like to speak to you for a little while tonight, the Lord enabling me of John, the man who had a vision. After all, I think that was the thing that characterized John, that John was a man who saw many wonderful things. We know that he is the author of three wonderful books, the Gospel of John, the Epistles of John, and also this book of Revelation.

And we know that the Gospel of John brings before us the wonderful gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are creatures spoken of in the book of Ezekiel as well as in the book of the Revelation, and these remarkable creatures who are described for us in that profound prophecy of Ezekiel are described as having four faces. One of the faces was like the face of a lion, the other face was like the face of an ox, the third face was the face of a man, and the fourth face was the face of an eagle, bringing before us four distinct attributes of the divine administrators of God's dealings with men.

And, of course, they also bring before us the divine character of God's dealings and presentation of his Son. It has been said, or described, that the Gospel of Matthew presents to us the lion. And, of course, we know that the lion is the king of the beef, and our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew is presented as the king.

From beginning to end, he is presented to Israel as the king. In the Gospel according to Mark, we have the ox, and the ox is the beast of burden. It is the beast of service, and that aptly describes the Gospel of Mark, because in Mark we have the Lord Jesus presented as the servant.

And we find that the words that characterize the Gospel of Mark are the words straightway, immediately. In other words, the Lord Jesus wasn't a servant who was sitting by, but he was here doing the Father's will and every step that he took, every move that he made, was a step to do the will of his Father. And, of course, the Gospel of Luke is the Son of Man, the face of a man.

The Lord Jesus is presented to us as a man, and, of course, that brings before us the thought of intelligence. And here we have in the Lord Jesus the man. And the Gospel of John is described or spoken of as the eagle, because the eagle was the bird that soared high into the air, that soared high into the heights, and yet had an eye that could see afar off.

And that characterizes John. John was a man who could see afar off. It was a sight that he saw that, first of all, drew him from following after human leaders, after men, to following the Lord Jesus.

In the first chapter of John's Gospel, we have how John was drawn to the Lord Jesus. Remember when John the Baptist, the next day seeing Jesus, he said, Behold the Lamb of God! And John, who had been baptized with John's baptism of repentance, acknowledging his guilt, was led to follow the Lord Jesus, and those hours that night that he spent with the Lord Jesus changed the entire course of his life, because he became a follower of the Lord Jesus and had no greater joy than to lean upon his bosom and speak of himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. And you know, John had a remarkable sight.

He had a remarkable vision. He had a remarkable presentation of the Gospel. John again and again brings before us that the way to be saved, the way to have everlasting life, is by believing on the Son.

Over ninety times John tells us it's by believing on the Son. He closes his Gospel, having presented seven wonderful portraits of the Lord Jesus in various circumstances as the one in whom they are to believe, and he closes that Gospel with these wonderful words. And many other signs truly did Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

For if they would be written, the world itself could not contain the books which should be written. But he says these are written, that he might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, he might have life through his name. My, you know, if you'll just take the Gospel of John, and if you'll read the Gospel of John, and believe the Gospel of John, you'll be led to see the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus, as the one who died for sinners.

You'll be led to believe in him, and you'll be led to know you have eternal life. Reuben A. Torrey, who was an atheist when he was a college student and then was converted, often dealt with infidels in a unique way. He would speak to them and tell them that if you will only, suppose for instance you don't believe that there is a God, well if you will only honestly bow your heart and your head and say in the presence of God, O God, if there is a God, if you will show me from this book, if this is your book, what is the truth, if there is truth, I will believe it and I will follow it.

And he says oftentimes in speaking with atheists and laying that challenge down to them, he has seen some of them brought to know the Lord Jesus. Because John in his Gospel gives us a wonderful vision of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior so that you and I might know that we have eternal life. In his epistles, John gives us a wonderful vision of how that life is carried out.

Because my friends, eternal life is not a little package that we carry around in our pocket like I do this purse that holds my coins. You know, every once in a while I mislay this purse. Oh, I put it in a drawer or some place and then I begin to look around for it.

That's the way some people think of eternal life. They think that eternal life is a little purse that they carry around with them and they feel it and they say, well, I've got eternal life. But you know, eternal life, my friend, is a life.

It's a life that is implanted within our souls and it is a life that is lived out. And if we want to know the pattern of that life, if we want to know the character of that life, if we want to know what manner of life that life is, why, we come to the epistles of John and we find out as we read those epistles how this eternal life expresses itself as it lives amongst men. He gives us a vision of the perfect example of this life, working it out in our lives, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

But you know, the vision that I want to speak about especially is what we have here in this Revelation. My, you know, this book of Revelation is a wonderful book. We are blessed in reading every part of the Bible, but God puts a special blessing upon those who will read this book and who will listen to this book because, sad to say, there are those who come to this book and they say, well, that's a book of confusion, that's a book of darkness, that's a book that you can't understand, and yet the very name, the Revelation of Jesus Christ is the unveiling, that God is unveiling to you and me his Son, the Lord Jesus.

And you know, I went through a concordance this afternoon and I found that over 40 times John says and John speaks of things that he saw, that he records for us in this wonderful book. He saw this and he saw that and he saw that and he saw the other thing. And what I want to speak about to you tonight for a little while is what John saw about that wonderful destiny that is before you and me who belong to the Lord.

You know, the Christian life has a goal. The Christian life has an end. We find, as it says concerning Abraham in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, they look for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

They were looking forward to that city and because of that they were separated from the world that was around them because there was a city that they were on their way to and that they were looking forward to being in. I don't know how many, I suppose most of you read Togum's Progress, but you remember that time when Christian came in the course of his journey. You remember when he came to the palace, beautiful, and he was brought into that palace by those various ones who took him in.

And you remember while they were waiting for supper why there were three of those godly women, patience and prudence and charity, and they were talking to him and speaking to him about different things. And you remember that one of them said, Do you ever long to go back to where you came from? Is your heart ever inclined to turn back to where you came from? He says, Oh yes, sometimes it is. Well, when it is, what do you do? Well, he says, When I think of going back, he says, I begin to look at the wonderful things that he has given me in this beautiful robe and in this scroll.

And he says, I begin to think of how he has helped me along the trials and the difficulties of the journey. And then he says, I begin to think of that celestial city that I am on my way to. And he says, As I think of that wonderful city that I am on my way to, he says, why, I lose all desire for that city from whence I came out in my desire for that city that is ahead of me.

You know, John gives us a little picture of that city here in the 21st chapter of Revelation, 22nd chapter of Revelation. As you and I look at this beautiful city, may I suggest to you some of the things that are suggested to us in John's description of this wonderful city that is before us. Now, of course, we know that as we look at this here in the 9th verse, it says, There came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Now, we know that as the Lord is describing this city by his angel, we know that he is using earthly pictures or earthly things to illustrate to you and me what it is that he is describing. Now, of course, some people ask the question, Well, do you think heaven is a place, or do you think heaven is a state? Well, friends, I believe that both of these things are true.

I believe that heaven is a place, but I believe that it is also a state. And the very fact that it is the city, of course, this is the heavenly city that descends from God and which is going to be God's satellite in space. And here we have the city described for us as that which has the glory of God, and it says, Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

Now, there's no doubt about it, my friends, that first of all, this city and this place, this destiny that is ours, is a place of beauty. When God wants to describe beauty, when God wants to bring before our eyes beauty, why, he uses the precious stones and the minerals of this earth to illustrate to us beauty. I remember some years ago, I was looking through a National Geographic magazine, and as I was looking through it, why, in it, it had an article with beautiful colored pictures of some of the most beautiful stones that I have ever seen.

And as I looked at those stones, I thought to myself, how apt is God's description of that heavenly city when he describes it using beautiful stones, because I don't think that there's anything that sets forth beauty and glory so much as the various mineral stones that God gives us in this book of the Revelation. I remember some years ago, I was downtown in Des Moines. It was a sunny afternoon, and I was standing on the corner waiting for the light to change, and as I turned, why, suddenly my eye was as it were hit by a ray of light, and I turned to see what the ray of light was, and there was a jeweler's window.

And as I walked toward the window to see what it was that caught my eye, there I saw those beautiful diamonds which were reflecting in a number of different colors the rays of the sun, and I thought to myself, what a beautiful picture that is, what a beautiful description that is, what an example that is to me of what that heavenly city is going to be like. It's going to have the glory of God. It's going to reflect the light as the jasper stone, a brilliant luminous globe that soars in space, which will be the dwelling place as well as the expression of those who belong to him.

There's no doubt about it, my friends. It's going to be a place of beauty. But you notice it says in the 12th verse, "...and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and the names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." It had a wall great and high.

My friend, that city is not only going to be a place of beauty, but it's going to be a place of security. The wall suggests to us that evil is never again going to enter into the universe of God. You know, people have asked me sometimes, why didn't no sin come into creation when Satan sinned? Satan was the most beautiful, the most intelligent, the highest of all God's creatures, and sin came into the universe.

And then when God placed man in the Garden of Eden and surrounded him with every blessing, sin came into the Garden of Eden. Will it be possible that after we've been there 10,000 years, will it be possible that sin could after all enter in, and perhaps we might be misled, we might be deceived, we might fall prey to the power of the evil one? No, my friends. This wall tells us there's going to be everlasting security.

This wall assures us, my friend, that evil will never again enter into the universe of God, that evil, my friend, will have been put in its place, that evil will have been judged, and evil will forever be put out of the presence of God and will never again rise, will never again manifest itself, will never again express itself in any manner, shape, or form. That wall that is used to describe the exterior of this city brings before us, my friend, that it's a place of everlasting security. But you notice it tells us something else.

It tells us here in the 14th verse, and the wall of the city had 12 foundations, and in them the names of the 12 apostles of the land. You've never seen a city like this. There isn't another city like this, a city which has 12 foundations.

And you know what that means? Here is a city, here is a state, here is a condition, my friends, that is going to be characterized by stability. Men have had great cities in the world. There have been famous cities.

Remember the city of Babylon, which was one of the most beautiful cities of ancient civilization, a city that Nebuchadnezzar gloried in? But Babylon is no more. And my friends, other cities that have been famous, those cities have disappeared as well. But here is a city that has 12 foundations.

Here is a city, my friends, that is never going to pass away. And I want you to notice that it says in them the names of the 12 apostles of the land. In them the names of the 12 apostles of the land.

Because you know, every one of these apostles, they were unanimous. They were absolutely one in their presentation of what the foundation of that city was. Peter, what is the foundation of that city? How do you get into that city? What did Peter say? Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ. You and I could go to this man by the name of James, and we say, James, how do you get into that city? What is the foundation of that city? What does James say? Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. Every one of these disciples, every one of these apostles, they had one single testimony.

And yet each of them gave it in his own distinctive way. Each of them gave it with his own particular emphasis. Each of them presented Christ.

You know, the Bible says that the assembly is the epistle of Christ. Ye are his epistle. Now, sometimes we take that to mean that the individual believer is the epistle of Christ.

My friend, no single individual could be the complete epistle of Christ, because no single individual can express and make known all that there is in Christ. I preached with a brother whose name I've mentioned, and he often loved to tell about how he was converted in Northern Ireland. How after a year of concern about his soul, seven preachers came to his home, and they had a meeting, and seven preachers spoke.

And every one of those same preachers spoke on the single text in John 3, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. Seven preachers, one right after another, and every one of them preached on the same text, and no two of them presented in the same way or exhausted the depths of it. My friends, that city had twelve foundations, because while those twelve apostles were unanimous in their testimony as to what was the foundation of that city, each one of them could only contribute his portion, and it took the whole to make the foundation of that city.

My friends, here is a city that has foundations. Let me ask you tonight, what are you depending upon to get to heaven? What is the foundation of your hope? As you sit in this meeting tonight, if I was to ask you, if I was to ask you tonight, why do you expect to get to heaven? What would your answer be? What would your answer be? Do you have the foundation of what these men had? Are you basing it all on what the word of God says concerning the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you been born again? Have you been washed from your sins by the blood of Christ? Have you been born and indwelt of his Holy Spirit? Do you have that life within you which is the life of God? Our friends, we've got to have a good foundation. We've got to have a reliable foundation.

This is something that's going to be for eternity, and we've got to be sure. Are you sure? What is the foundation that you're resting on tonight? And you notice it says concerning the city. It tells us as we go

down, we don't have time to go into all the details.

Notice the 21st verse. It says, And the twelve gates were twelve pearls. Every several gate was of one pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were, transparent glass.

Now, you know, the hymns tell us about the streets of gold, don't they? They sing about the streets of gold, but my friends, the Bible doesn't talk about the streets of gold. The Bible doesn't say there are streets of gold. Now, this is all symbolic.

The Bible doesn't speak about the streets of gold. It says that the street of that city was of pure gold, as it were, transparent glass. Only one street in that city.

You know why? Because it expresses to us the harmony that there's going to be amongst those who are in that city. My friends, in that city, there's only one way. There's only, and there's absolute harmony and absolute unity.

There's no diversity. One woman says, oh, I'm so glad that it says in our Father's heart, in our Father's house, our many mansions, because up there, we Methodists will have a place by ourselves, we Presbyterians will be by ourselves, we Episcopalians. No, friends, there will be no more of that up there.

This one street means that there's going to be absolute harmony, all the divisions and all the discords and all the diverse ideas, that there are prevalence amongst people of God today. They're all going to be done away. We're all going to speak the same way.

We're all going to think the same way. We're all going to feel the same way. There's going to be absolute harmony.

There will never be a jarring note, a discordant note, to ever mar the harmony of that wonderful city. What a wonderful little foretaste we have of it down here, when we enjoy fellowship, one with another, and in unity can sing his praises, speak of him, converse with one another, and forget all the differences and all the divisions that are current in Christendom today. We can come together and just enjoy him and speak of him.

Harmony. Harmony. And that leads us to something else.

In the 22nd verse, it says, I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. No temple therein. In other words, here we have an intimacy, a nearness to God, a nearness to the Lamb, because you'll find here that the Lord God is associated with the Lamb.

My friends, now we have intimacy by faith. Now we have fellowship by faith. Now we see the Lord through a glass darkly.

Now we see him through his word, but there we're going to see him face to face. There's no temple. You know why? Because this city is described as a perfect cube.

1500 furlongs wide, 1500 furlongs long, 1500 furlongs high. It's a perfect cube. And the cube, the dwelling place of God in the tabernacle was a perfect cube.

The dwelling place of God in the temple was a perfect cube. In the tabernacle, ten cubits. In the temple, twenty cubits.

But here we have the cube. God himself enshrined in the center and the midst of his people. You know, a person got converted and he was full of joy and growing and going on in the things of God.

And he met a certain preacher or a certain individual, and this individual also knew the Lord. And so he was talking about how wonderful it would be when they get to heaven. And he says, he was trying to test him, see how spiritual he was.

And so he says, when you get to heaven, who's the first one that you're going to look for when you get to heaven? He says, why, the first one that I'm going to look for when I get to heaven? Well, who's the second one that you're going to look for? Well, he says, I'm going to look for my mother then and my father. Why, they're the ones who brought me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. You are.

Well, then who are you going to look for? Well, then I'm going to look for my Sunday school teacher. That one pointed me to the Lord Jesus. That's the one I'm going to look for.

You are. And you know, all the time his feeling was going down. He was thinking, my, this person certainly isn't very spiritual.

And then he brought a couple more questions. Who are you going to and he gave them to me. And finally he says, well, aren't you going to first of all look for the Lord Jesus when you get there? He says, why, of course not.

He says, I won't have to look for him. He's going to be the center of everything. I won't have to look for him.

You know, friends, heaven wouldn't be anything if he wasn't there. He's going to be enshrined in the very center. You've heard the story of the little girl who lived in a beautiful home.

She loved to play with her toys and fellowship with her mother. And you know, her mother became sick. And she was so sick that grandma had to take the little girl and take care of her while mother was in the hospital.

And it pleased the Lord to take mother home. And of course, when mother was taken home, the little girl was at the funeral. And of course, she didn't enter into it.

She didn't understand what she had lost. And at grandma, she says, Grandma, she had been saying it, why do I have to stay here? Why can't I go home and play with my toys? I want to play with my toys, grandma. Well, while mother was sick, she could say mother is sick.

But now mother was gone. She no longer had any excuse. And so finally, when she could withstand it no longer, she took the little girl to her home, and took her into that beautiful home, and into the room where she played with her toys.

And then she left her and withdrew. And for a little while, the little girl played with her toys, and suddenly the stillness, the quietness came upon her. And as it came upon her, she began to go from room to room, from room to room.

And finally, she was crying mother, mother, mother, and it dawned upon her that was what made home, not her toys. It was her mother. It's Jesus, the Lamb.

It says here, I saw no temple therein, no more distance, no more veil, no more darkness. I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, nor the glory of God delight in it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Oh, what intimacy! We sometimes sing, if here on earth the thoughts of thy love are so sweet, what will it be, O blessed Lord? Thy gladdening smile to meet. Oh, what an experience when we see Him face to face and are in the intimacy that we get a little glimpse of now and then down here. But only makes our hearts long for in that coming day.

Notice the 27th verse, There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. Here we have the good company we're going to have up there. You know, sometimes people say, well, if I go to hell, I'll have company.

My friends, society is a blessing of God. Fellowship is a blessing of God. When God made man and put him into the garden, he says it is not good for man to be alone.

And I still think that. It is not good for a man to be alone. I will make him and help meet for him.

And he gave him a companion, a help meet for him. And he does the same for the believer. He gives him fellowship.

My friends, there is going to be fellowship only in heaven. There is not going to be any fellowship. There is going to be no companionship.

There is going to be nothing to cheer the heart of the unsaved soul. Some years ago, I was driving in my car, listening to the radio one night, coming from a meeting, and I heard a radio account of a panologist who was giving an account of how they treated prisoners, and how they deal with prisoners. And he was giving an account of the ancient way and some of the modern methods of dealing with prisoners.

And he was telling about a prison in the East that they used to have, where the prisoners were kept in solitary confinement, never allowed to talk, never allowed to meet with one another, never allowed to eat together, never allowed to work together. And when those prisoners were interviewed, as this man was allowed to interview, they said the most awful thing about our imprisonment is, we've got to be alone. That loneliness, that aloneness, that solitariness, that's the awful thing of this prison.

And my friend said, they whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, are you one of that company? Are you going to be in that company? Oh, what fellowship! What joy! And he noticed it says in the 22nd chapter, He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the tree of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nation. He sees a river of water of life, a pure river, clear as crystal, in the midst of the tree of it, and on either side of it, he says there was a tree which bare twelve manner of fruits.

You know what this suggests to me? This suggests to me an ecstasy of life that surpasses anything that you and I have ever experienced down here. The river of life without end! The tree of life which bare

twelve manner of fruits! You know, we can listen to the best ministers of the we can have the most wonderful experiences down here, and eventually things become monotonous to us. We become weary of things.

I remember one time we were holding meetings in Houston, Texas. We were holding gospel meetings, and the Lord was working, and one particular night the Lord came in in a marvelous way and saved two people. And you know, the next day, while the Christians were just so happy, while we were meeting together and we were singing together during the day, we were meeting in the homes and talking and rejoicing because the Lord had saved two people.

We were just on the mountaintop of joy and delight and happiness. And you know, the next day, we were as weary and limp as dishrags. And I thought to myself, well, how is this? Why, yesterday we were on the mountaintop, and today you're down in the dumps and you've got no power to life.

Why? Well, friends, our nervous systems couldn't take it. We couldn't take it. We were lifted to the mountaintop.

You know, people find fault with Elijah because he sat under the juniper tree. But if you'll never experience what it is to be brought up to a crisis and to a mountaintop and to enjoy, as it were, an exhilarating ecstasy of experience of the blessing of God, you'll never experience that. It's only when you experience that that you can experience the depths and you can really sympathize with poor Elijah when he got down under the juniper and he says, Oh, let me die.

He'd been lifted so high that when it was all over, he was plunged. Now, here, there's a river of water of life, an endless source of blessing with a tree of life that has twelve manna of fruit. In other words, it's the Lord telling us, I'm going to give you something that will be constantly new, refreshing, reviving, something that will fill you with continual joy.

You know, I like that verse in Ephesians 2 where it says, In the ages to come, he's going to show the exceeding riches of his grace and his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. An ecstasy of life that will have a new body and capable of enjoying the throughout the countless ages of eternity. There shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.

Heaven's going to be a place of activity. His servants shall serve him. My friends, those twelve gates, they speak of administration.

The Bible says we shall judge, we shall reign with Christ. No, you're not. You shall judge angels.

He says in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, Knowing you not that we shall reign with him? And then it says, They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. His name shall be in their foreheads. What does that suggest to us? It suggests to us, my friends, an absolute conformity to the name and the tongue of the and the person of our Lord Jesus.

In the first epistle of John, John says, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we do know this, that when we see him, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. I heard a little story one time about three elderly believers, and they were talking about what a wonderful thing was going to be when the Lord came.

And one of them says, You know, the more I think of it, he says, the thing that's wonderful to me is that we're going to be with him. We're going to be with him. Isn't that wonderful? One of the two others says, Yes, that's wonderful, but I know something more wonderful than that we're going to be with him.

What? What's more wonderful than that we're going to be with him? Why, he says, the Lord we're going to be like him. That's more wonderful. We're going to be like him.

And the third one says, Well, I know something that's more wonderful than that. More wonderful than that we're going to be with him, and that we're going to be like him? What could be more wonderful than that? He said, It's going to be forever. It will be forever.

Isn't that wonderful? We're going to be with him. We're going to be with him and it's going to be forever. When John saw the vision, he worshiped.

When you and I think of what is before us, what can a do but create worship and a desire that our feet might make haste to that destiny, that we might see him face to face. Let's stand and sing number 392, shall we? You

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